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BOSTON LETTER.

Artists' Festival—Festivities in Honor of the Return of the Crusaders.

OUT of a month of careful consideration and vigorous preparation, the Artists' Festival has been evolved, reaching its completion on the evening of April 27, and on the whole this has proved one of the most interesting festivals that the Boston Art Students' Association has ever



COSTUMES AT THE ARTIST'S FESTIVAL.

held. No effort was spared to remove every vestige of the nineteenth century from within the gates, even to the dress of the most humble attendant and the absence of the modern ice cream supper.

The theme for the festival was, of course, the first point to be decided by the committee on arrangements, and round a returning band of Crusaders the rest of the picture easily grouped itself. To the general period of the Crusades attaches not only a great human interest (the exact

date of this special Crusade was enveloped in an artistic atmosphere), but it was also a time of great magnificence of costume. The Byzantine influence was still strongly felt in Europe, and intercourse with the East through the Crusades had taught the Europeans to crave the rich colors and designs of Oriental fabrics, heavily woven with threads of gold and silver, and ornamented with jewels and embroideries. We find the head-dress of the Persian queen exactly reproduced or modified in a thousand ways to adorn the beauty of the European princess. The Crusader, for his part, having found the wisdom of adopting the white and flowing robe of the Saracen as a protection from the Eastern sun, probably wore them home to France and England with as much pride—with infinitely more pride than we of today flaunt our little guerdons of travel in distant lands.

For their admirable representation of this most important group of the Crusaders the festival has to thank the Tavern Club, to whom the Boston Art Students' Association instinctively looks for kindly coöperation in all their enterprises of this nature, while to the Architectural Club is due the spirited and picturesque reproduction of a band of archers. A committee on costume was established as soon as possible who held themselves ready on two afternoons a week to give advice as to costumes with the aid of books and of drawings which they had prepared.

Copley Hall was converted into a huge royal tent, on the top of which the light from the electric lamps very fairly simulated sunshine. Below the slant, the tent was hung about with old and beautiful tapestries, and many shields bearing the devices of their supposed owners, while overhead floated banners, presumably trophies of war. The end of the tent opened onto a wood vista of old gnarled trees, rocks, etc. (this on the stage, the proscenium arch being covered with roses), and from beyond the wood, from some old cathedral tower, a chime of bells rang out the hours and quarter hours. Along the middle of one side of the tent was a raised dais with seats for the queen and her ladies and distinguished guests, all of whose arms were emblazoned on shields at the back of the canopy, which was hung with red velvet and gold. On the opposite side the tent opened into a latticed arbor (Allston Hall), over which climbed roses in profusion.

The guests being for the most part seated along the sides of the tent, a herald announced from the edge of the wood the approach of the procession, and through an opening in the wood came forward first the archers, in padded leather corselets and green tunics, followed by a choir of forty boys and men (the choir of Emmanuel Church), singing as they came. These were in long robes of a rich red, with red helmet-shaped caps. After them came representatives of the different guilds, and the peasants, fagot gatherers, etc., all in carefully chosen costumes, passing

through the tent and out at the further end. Before the voices of the choir had quite died away in the distance, a flourish of trumpets proclaimed the coming of the Crusaders, preceded by twenty marshals. These were in red tunics over which were tabards quartered in green and white with lions-rampant in white on the green quarterings and headcloths of steel. Then the Crusaders, in coats of mail and tunics of white with a red cross on the breast, or red with a white cross, according to the order to which they belonged. Some Crusaders had brought black slaves with them from the Holy Land, and these bore their shields for them in the procession. Having been drawn up before the queen by their leader, and having saluted her in the name of "St. George and Merrie England," the Crusaders (amid clamorous greetings and cheers) marched through the tent and back again to the edge of the wood, where the attendants brought them benches that they might be seated during the performance of a play and other festivities. Curtains were then drawn across, shutting off the wood for a moment, then drawn aside again, showing the wood once more, in which had been placed a small banquet table and two seats of the simplest description, this being the whole setting of the play.

The play — Rosemonde; a tragedy of the severest type, the scene being laid in Verona in the year 560 — was written for Rachel and played but once by her. It was given in French and extremely well played. Next came a hobby-horse tournament and some beautiful dances, a most graceful and dignified sarabande by knights and ladies, followed by characteristic dances by the peasants. Rigidly simple refreshments, such as "hot cross buns" and ale, were then distributed *ad libitum* from small handcarts, and at midnight the festival was formally closed, leaving the rest of the night to a nineteenth century brass band and modern dancing.



PICTURESQUE ILLINOIS.

"We have no crags and turrets, no lakes nor rolling ocean,
The Boneyard is the only stream we know that is in motion;
We're right here on the prairie, in the great old Prairie State,
And if you know a better one, we'll help you celebrate."

THUS sing the rollicking boys of the State University, and as I listened to them one evening not long ago, the mystery of that eternal, boundless prairie all came back to me, its majestic reach was again before my eyes. What an appeal there is in the early home scenes! They become part of our very being, and, though far removed in the perspective of years and shadowed by the half-pictured confusion of later expe-